DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 108 995 SO 008 373

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TITLE The World and Your School District.
PUB DATE 28 Mar 75
NOTE 19p.; Paper prepared for the Education Commission of the States, Comparative and International Education Society (San Francisco, California, March 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Citizen Participation; *Cultural Awareness; *Curriculum Development; *Educational Needs; Elementary Secondary Education; *Global Approach; International Education; Program Descriptions; World Affairs

ABSTRACT

Schools are not presently educating children for life in a future, globally oriented society. The challenge is to include the following elements into every child's basic education: (1) an international dimension and a global perspective; (2) understanding and respect for all peoples, cultures, civilizations, values, and ways of life; (3) awareness of increasing global interdependence between peoples and nations; (4) ability to communicate effectively with others; (5) recognition of the duties incumbent on individuals, social groups, and nations toward each other; (6) appreciation of the necessity of international solidarity and cooperation; and (7) readiness on the part of the individual to participate in solving problems of the local community, the country, and the world at large. Many university, foundation, and federal programs in international education exist; yet more leadership is needed at the local level. Possible local activities include contacting congressmen for matching funds to local education authorities; designing and initiating new programs at the state level through the state departments of public instruction and individual school districts; urging higher standards in textbook adoption; and encouraging the use of lay teachers, businessmen, students, and foreign visitors who have firsthand knowledge of international affairs. (Author/DE)

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THE WORLD AND YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROJECT

SP 008 373

Paper Prepared for the Education
Commission of the States, CIES
Panel, San Francisco, March 28, 1975

THE WORLD AND YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Why International Education?

Truly, these are the times that try an administrator's soul, test a politician's resolve and burden an educator's conscience. Too little is expected to produce so much in U.S. public education. The spiraling demands placed on our schools exceed the resources of the local community and its capacity to meet staggering costs. Nowadays, Goldilocks is lucky to get any porridge at all, especially if the three bears are into highway construction, public works, or any other competing and necessary municipal service.

So you ask, why international education? My response, quite simply, is this: an education which does not prepare our children to live in a highly-interdependent world is no education at all. Children who lack other-culture knowledge and experiences are effectively stunted. They are condemned to frustration and political alienation because ignorance deprives them of influence over people and events.

Today's schoolchildren need to know about the rest of the world or else they will be at its mercy. They must be aware that what they do affects the rest of the world, too, since it will come back to haunt them in a global community they cannot

escape and in which they are firmly enmeshed. Finally, these schoolchildren, as our future citizens, need knowledge of the world to oversee their own government's behavior within it. No longer can "foreign policy" be considered a matter solely for diplomats, trade experts, and other specialists. Indeed, it never should have been. More wars have been inflicted on peoples by governments than peoples have ever caused their governments to declare.

Here, then, are four compelling reasons for nurturing a capacity to learn about and experience other cultures. The first reason we Americans must globalize public education is elemental-survival. We must sustain informed connections in order to survive, if not to prosper.

A second reason is humanitarian. If the "haves" of the world do not care and share, we will have little claim to self-decency in a desperate and starving world. Experts already predict 150 million famine deaths a year by 1980. It would be as if three of every four Americans alive today would die before Guy Lumbardo's orchestra ushered in 1976.

The third reason for attempting, through public education, to relate to all peoples and cultures is the need for shared brain power. Historically, our country is the product of intelligence imported from abroad, of persons escaping from

tyrannies, pogroms and famines. We need the best-of-all-possible minds to solve such global problems as over-population, pollution, energy shortages, hunger, urban sprawl, war disease, and discrimination and injustice. The list is long and time is short.

Even if security, compassion and human survival were not at issue, other-culture learning would be prescribed as the insulin to counteract what one observor termed "the excess sugar of a diabetic culture." While Americans may be overweight, we are aesthetically starved. Thrills and violence, not beauty and reflection abound, making us fretful, anxious. One way to avert a national nervous breakdown is to educate our children about the dazzling diversity of human expression. Full appreciation of music, drama, costume, dance, sports, cooking, gardening, literature and religious rites is unattainable without an education which opens the mind and cultivates taste.

What We Need

By and large, our schools are not preparing today's children for tomorrow's world. Traditional approaches reflect the philosophy of simpler days when our educational system concentrated its efforts on making good Americans out of immigrants.

Those days are passed. The subject matter of public education must now be viewed as being fundamentally mankind. To meet the challenge of globalizing public instruction there can be no such thing as business as usual. Educating for worldmindedness is what we want and what we need in the immediate future.

The worldminded, as opposed to traditional student:

<u>knows</u>

... that the earth is a fragile, finite planet whose resources are limited

... that people have defined numerous and rich life styles

... that underlying cultural differences are common human needs and dreams

... that the world is divided into close to 150 states whose nationalistic behavior threatens peace and human survival

... that it is important to be informed about others and interested in their doings

... that what happens out in the world determines how all of us live at home

... that it is useful and enlightening to view life comparatively

... that accepting others enriches rather than diminishes each of us

The global child acts

... intelligently as a citizen to promote a humane domestic and foreign policy

... responsibly to curb wasteful consumption of the world's resources

... ethically to aid the less fortunate, the poor, the wretched of this earth

... professionally to contribute to the solution of man's common problems

A UNESCO special committee of governmental experts just recently issued an appeal to member states for increased attention to international education. As you well know, education in the United States is a state and local responsibility. Thus, this U.N. appeal, if it is to be honored at all, must reach state governors, legislators and educators who bear the responsibility for the improvement of education in its broadest sense and at all levels. The world, through its international organizations, is asking your school district:

(1) to contribute to promoting international solidarity and cooperation; and

(2) to aid in solving world problems affecting the individual's and communities' life and exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Major guiding principles of this new educational policy challenge school districts the world over, whether they be in

Bangor or Bangkok, in Cleveland or Calcutta, in Lubbock or Leningrad, in Peoria or Peking. The challenge is to factor these elements into every child's basic education:

- an international dimension and a global perspective at all levels and in all forms
- understanding and respect for all peoples, cultures, civilizations, values and ways of life, including domestic ethnic cultures
- awareness of the increasing global interdependence between peoples and nations
- ability to communicate effectively with others
- recognition not only of the rights but also of the duties incumbent upon individuals, social groups and nations toward each other
- appreciation of the necessity for international solidarity and cooperation
- readiness on the part of the individual to participate in solving the problems of the local community, the country, and the world at large.

A tall order, you say, and you are right. To translate these broad objectives into reality requires the courage of a David, the wisdom of a Solomon, and the faith of an Abraham. No one ever said it would be easy, but begin we must.

Getting There: It Can Be Done

Lest anyone feel discouraged or remain unconvinced about the feasibility of globalizing public education, fear not. International education is a process, and many if not all of the key elements in this process already exist. What is needed is not a massive infusion

of dollars, or a vastly expanded curriculum, or a totally revolutionized educational system. What is really required, more than anything else, is simply this, leadership. If people like yourselves -- parents, policy-makers, school board members, teachers, superintendents, principals, and elected officials-are energetic and concerned enough, much can be accomplished simply by drawing on and developing existing resources. All the money stashed away in Swiss banks would not get the job done if you, the educators and public officials, were not involved in and committed to the task of globalizing your children's education. You, the leaders in public education, can indeed place your school district squarely and meaningfully into today's world. conversely, only you can open your school district to this world, with all its human diversity, its despair, its joy, its beauty.

Much has already been accomplished, by people just like you. Let me share a few examples of international education programs to give you a better idea of what others are up to in U.S. public education.

-- some university programs

The University of Michigan conducts a Project on Asian Studies in Education which makes use of the University's voluntary services and resources, including its area studies programs and its School of Education. The program wants to bring to life the Asian experience for Americans. It receives

some support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, some from the Japanese government. Briefly, here is what the project offers local school districts. First, it maintains a Resource Center which gathers and evaluates educational materials on Asia, including audio-visual aids. Learning packages on China expose schoolchildren to the life of the Chinese people and encourage youngsters to develop solutions to problems which the Chinese system is now experiencing. If elementary and secondary schools request consultation services, these are extended. There are conferences, seminars and summer workshops which help teachers to design their own materials. Teachers also get to meet scholars from Asian countries who are visiting the United States.

Other examples abound, including BAYCEP (Bay Area China Education Project), a project of the National Committee for U.S. - China Relations. BAYCEP, supervised by Stanford and Berkeley faculty, has worked in more than forty schools in six Bay Area counties in California and has served over 8,000 schoolchildren and over 150 public school teachers in its initial year alone.

The Latin American Center at U.C.L.A. has recently embarked on a ten-year effort to develop curricular materials for the study of Latin America for all pre-collegiate grade levels as well as for the wider adult community. The approach is multidisciplinary, and studies Latin America through an ecological, societal and cultural perspective. Part of the spadework for this project included a survey which assessed the importance parents attach to their children's exposure to and study of other cultures. Other surveys will be conducted of teachers, students, and administrators in the local Los Angeles area and later, nation-wide. Suitable materials are being developed for use in grades 3 through 9. Teachers are being taught how to teach other teachers and to share the curriculum units on a statewide basis.

-- an associational program

The Association for Childhood Education International focuses its energies on the professional development of teachers. The Association is a non-profit membership organization with over 40,000 members. It supports its programs from membership dues and the sale of its publications. One of its programs, Neighbors Unlimited, is a special project in international and intercultural education. The project has provided a form for an "Elementary Survey of the International-Intercultural Dimensions of Your School" and gives evaluative and back-up advice on its use. The Association publishes a variety of materials including "Background Books on the World for Teachers, "Books on Teaching About the World," and periodic "Resource Bulletins." It also sponsors conferences, workshops and summer study programs, programs foreign visitors, and maintains an information, library and retrieval service.

-- a foundation program

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation supports an educational affliliate program known as the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc. (IDEA). Its International Affairs Grants and Projects division funds pre-collegiate global studies. Recent grants funded a survey of international education in Ohio Public Schools, and an exploration of work-study exchanges with China, in cooperation with Antioch College. One IDEA survey, begun in 1973, has analyzed global educational programs in 72 elementary and secondary schools around the country and included recommendations to policy-makers on how and what to change in order to improve international education in our public schools. In addition, IDEA sponsors conferences such as one convened in Zurich on "Global Education: Helping Secondary Students Understand International Issues."

-- a state program

Several states have devoted considerable efforts to globalizing public education -- Indiana, California, North Carolina and New York, to name a few. The New York State Education Department supports a Center for International Programs and Comparative Studies. This Center gives special attention to the non-European regions of the world, develops knowledge about foreign educational systems and assists other divisions of the State Education Department in furthering their own international activities. A Foreign Area Materials Center, in New York city, prepares and distributes materials on foreign areas, while an Educational Resources Center prepares materials about India for American schools and colleges and arranges programs for American teachers and faculty members. This Center is located in New Delhi, India. Other popular activites include in-service institutes and conferences for elementary and secondary school teachers, seminars for college faculty, and programs for undergraduate study of neglected languages and experimental opportunities for students.

-- a federal program

The U.S. Office of Education, under the auspices of its Division of International Education, sponsors a Group Projects Abroad Program which plays an important part in retooling teachers for their new responsibilities in international studies. Groups of public school teachers are sent overseas for two to three months. The Division also administers a Curriculum Consultant Program which provides educational institutions with an opportunity to bring educators from other countries to the United States to teach in local school districts and to work with school teachers on the development of international studies curricula. Finally, NDEA

> Title VI Language and Area Studies Centers, of which there are fifty around the country, are required to engage in diffusion or outreach activities in the public schools in their states. Many reach out across state borders as well and provide in-service workshops, materials development activities, and a wide range of other vital services.

The range and vigor of activity aimed at globalizing U.S. public education is hardly reflected in this sampling. A fuller listing would include the work of such groups as the Foreign Policy Association or the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. Private foundations and institutes include, among others, the American Field Service, Youth for Understanding, the Center for War/Peace Studies, the Institute for World Order, and the Middle East Institute. University programs are too numerous to list separately, as are local and state-sponsored initiatives. Finally, a wide range of federal programs fund U.S. public collegiate, and adult education, in the international field, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State.

As leaders in public education, you can stimulate interest and maximize the wealth of human and physical resources in your state and local school districts. You can help locate and focus federal and university resources, can coordinate efforts and link up people in primary, secondary, collegiate and adult education.

You can be the spokesmen who advocate infusing global perspectives into the curriculum, and where necessary and feasible, can expand the current range of services and offerings. You can help redress our Eurocentric bias and can innovate by assuring some level of depth and coherence in the internationalizing process. Remember, 80%-90% of the expenses in international education have always been supplied at the state and local levels. You have always been the key actors in this educational drama. You have and can continue to make all the difference in the world.

Some Modest Proposals

Let me leave you with a few musings about some specific ways in which you can enter into the process of globalizing your schools.

At the federal level, you can contact your Congressmen and urge them to provide matching grants to your state and local education authorities under existing and expanded legislative authorities. Monies could support information centers, curriculum consultants, in-service Professional Development Centers, media efforts, and research and development in public education for international understanding. If the law does not presently provide for some of these activities, then your state leaders and governors should press for new legislation

realistic appropriations, and expanded authority under existing legislation.

At the state level, in like fashion, you can press for needed funding and services. You can get involved in the design of new programs as well as sustain existing ones. You can appoint consultants in international education to State Departments of Public Instruction; arrange statewide programs and conferences; encourage international exchange of students, teachers and administrators; sponsor community projects in world affairs; provide in-service workshops; and, above all, alter teacher certification requirements so that a meaningful international dimension is included in teacher training. At this moment in our nation's history, when we have never before been so painfully aware of our global inter-dependencies, less than 5% of our prospective teachers have any, and I mean any exposure whatsoever to global perspectives and international course content.

The Education Commission of the States could give increased priority to international education. A similar move has been made by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Commission might agree to set up a task force on the internationalization of public education, along the same lines as its task forces on early childhood education, or on equal rights for women in education.

Educators and policy-makers can set higher standards for text book adoption and refuse to employ texts which are stereotyping, which abuse or ignore mankind's cultural diversity and fundamental dignity. Schools can encourage the use of lay teachers in the classroom: businessmen with international interests; state and county officials who deal in international aspects of local development; foreign students in the U.S.; Americans knowledgeable about their cultural heritage in other parts of the world; retired diplomats; American college students studying other languages and cultures; faculty members with world skills; and local school district members active with Rotary International, the United Nations Association, the Partners of the Americas, etc.

Finally, you and others like you can, if so inclined, host international visitors, serve on campus international committees, and sponsor group travel/study tours. You can address yourselves to the challenge of getting personal experiences into the educational delivery system, and to the even greater challenge of promoting responsible world and national citizenship. Only you can close the gap between the educator and the policy-maker. You are both. The theme: each one reach one, each one teach one.

A Final Note

Many of you — teachers, state legislators, public officials, educators and administrators — have already engaged energetically

in many, if not all of the activities I have so bravely, if not somewhat naively, listed above. Some of you have engaged in none of these, while others may remain unconvinced, pessimistic, or worse yet, apathetic. So be it. Human motivation is a very personal matter. No outsider can be so presumptuous as to make sweeping statements about what you should do, especially in your own local school districts.

What I have tried to convey, if nothing else, is some sense of the needs and rationale for internationalizing our schools, some idea of what has to be done and what others have accomplished, and some general ways to meet the challenge. Again, all depend heavily on you, the leaders who shape educational policies.

By way of illustration, let me conclude by comparing two versions of the world, one as it is perceived to be by a sizable number of Americans, the other as it actually is and is likely to be.

Rumor has it that a small-town reporter for a local newspaper in Michigan was given the assignment of covering a monthly meeting of the school board. This particular session, however, was more than routine, since the local school district had, after much correspondence, secured a guest speaker all the way from the state capital.

The distinguished guest began his speech with: "As you know, I've been around a good bit. I've made speeches up in Marquette and down in Livonia. I've been to Grand Rapids and Fowlerville and up in Clare. I've been to meetings in Lansing and Detroit, too, of course. And one thing I've learned: people are pretty much the same the world over!"

Surely, the world your school district experiences is and must be a wider one than this. It certainly is a more desperate one, as the second illustration reveals.

As a nation, we have suffered very little, comparatively speaking, from kaleidoscopic global events. Americans are only now beginning to glimpse the long-term implications of the world's basic inequities. Daniel Shaughnessy, in his War on Hunger, has developed some useful and vivid imagery.

> Picture yourself living in a small town or village of 1,000 people. Of the 1,000 villagers, 700 are non-white. In fact, only 90 are North American, 60 Americans, and 190 European. This means that the bulk of the population is made up of Africans (100), Latin Americans (50) and Asians (570).
>
> Half the village, 500 people, goes to bed hungry. In truth, at least half of this number, or 250 is starving.
>
> The U.S. citizens (60) receive about half of the total income of the community each year and use 30% of all its resources.
>
> The rest of the village does not fare well at all. About 800 of your neighbors live in shacks and huts unfit to house your family pet.
>
> By the way, the size of the village is expected to double by the year 2010 A.D.. Of course, many will die.
>
> Remember: You live in this village and there is no place to run, no ocean to cross, no forest to clear, no new continents to plunder and inhabit. There is no easy way out and no escape.

> Like it or not, we are one world and it is the only world we've got. We are all in this together.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is up to you to see that the way things are in public education is not the way things will be. A 1973 survey of fifty State Boards of Education yielded fifty-four items considered to be priorities in education. Not one explicitly related to international education or global affairs. Not one is likely to relate to this area unless the policy-makers and the educators can unite to lead their school districts into the world and to admit the world into their school districts.

Remember, today's pupils must live well into the Twenty-First Century. Let us help them.

Thank you.

* The final anecdote was inspired by an item in the March, 1975 issue of Reader's Digest, "Laughter, the Best Medicine." I also owe much to two colleagues, Stephen K. Bailey of the American Council on Education and Granville Austin of the Department of State.